

Colorado Braille Competency Test and Braille Renewal Modules Procedures for Allowable Accommodations

Colorado Department of Education

Procedures for Requesting an Accommodation

The purpose of the Colorado Braille Competency Test is to establish a sufficient level of accuracy and efficiency in the knowledge and skills of the licensed teacher endorsed in the area of visual impairment to read and write the Unified English Braille Code. The test involves reading Unified English Braille and producing a written braille sample using a Perkins Brailier. It is a four-hour test.

More information about the Colorado Braille Competency Test can be found in a separate document entitled *Braille Competency Testing Guidelines* located at the CDE webpage:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs

In the event that a test candidate anticipates the need for an accommodation(s) to take the Colorado Braille Competency Test, he or she will be required to submit a written request with supporting documentation to the Colorado Department of Education.

The use of the following items has been pre-approved for candidates who are blind or visually impaired:

- Hand-held magnifier
- Felt-tip marker
- Closed Circuit Television (CCTV)
- Reader / Scribe

Requests for any of the above accommodations do not require a complete application, but must be requested one month prior to the scheduling of the Colorado Braille Competency Test so that any needed equipment and/or personnel arrangements can be made.

For all other accommodation requests, the candidate must comply with the following procedures:

1. The candidate must submit a written request for the use of an accommodation(s) to Dr. Tanni Anthony at the Colorado Department of Education a minimum of one month prior to a proposed date to take the Colorado Braille Competency Test.
2. The request must be accompanied by the following documentation:
 - (a) The request must identify the requested accommodation(s) and detail the reason(s) for the needed accommodation(s). Information must be provided as to how the requested accommodation(s) is aligned to the difficulty of the candidate to read and write literary braille based on the required equipment and time frame of the test. Information must be provided

as to the need for an accommodation(s) for EACH part, the multiple choice and/or the braille sample, of the Colorado Braille Competency Test.

- (b) Medical diagnosis from a physician with supporting documentation to verify the disability condition and the need for the accommodation(s) requested. Confirmation as to how the disability was verified by the physician (e.g., examination, assessment, etc.) must be included.
- (c) Verification from the candidate's employer of the specific need for accommodation and current use of the specified accommodation in the employee's work environment. For example, as a result of the documented disability, does the employee utilize specialized equipment? The employer must verify that the requested accommodation(s) is actively in place for the employee in the work setting for the skill set of reading and producing braille.

3. The request must be mailed to:

Dr. Tanni Anthony
Colorado Department of Education
Exceptional Student Leadership Unit
1560 Broadway, Suite 1100
Denver, CO 80202

Written approval or denial of the requested accommodation(s) will be provided to the candidate within three weeks of the receipt of the candidate's written request, accompanying medical documentation, and employer verification. The CDE-appointed Braille Competency Committee will review the anonymous content of the accommodation materials on first an individual and then a collective basis. The final decision of the accommodation approval or disapproval will be made by the CDE per the input of the Braille Competency Committee and, as needed, legal counsel.

Questions about the accommodations process can be sent to Dr. Anthony via email at anthony_t@cde.state.co.us or by phone at (303) 866-6681.

Arrangements must be made with Dr. Anthony regarding who will provide the specific piece of equipment/software to be used in the accommodation.

Allowable Accommodations

The following is a list of allowable accommodations to access the Colorado Braille Competency Test per established evidence of need:

- A live reader may be used to read aloud both the multiple-choice section and the braille passage for candidates who are blind or visually impaired. The reader must be an approved CDE proctor. Simulated braille in the multiple choice section will be provided as embossed braille. The live

reader can also be used to access reference materials provided at the test site and to record multiple choice answers.

- If an alternate format is needed for the testing materials for a candidate who is blind or visually impaired, the following formats are allowable: (a) an enlarged print version (18 point) hard copy provided at the testing site and/or (b) magnification (nonelectronic magnification such as a handheld magnifiers / electronic magnification devices such as a CCTV) provided by the candidate.
- Extended time requests will be considered and determined based on (a) medical documentation of need, (b) accommodations approved at the work site, and (c) validation by the employer. Accuracy and efficiency are two constructs measured by the Colorado Braille Competency Test. The four hour time allocation for the test under standard testing procedures as a means to measure the efficiency of the candidate in reading and writing Unified English Braille. Extended time requests will be reviewed carefully to ensure that the efficiency requirement of the Colorado Braille Competency Test is protected.
- If a candidate is physically unable to use a manual Perkins Braille, the braille passage may be produced using a Perkins Braille with extension keys, an electric Perkins Braille, or the Mountbatten or other electronic braille writer with braille-input only. This equipment is to be provided by the test taker and, in the case of the approved use of the Mountbatten or other approved electronic braille writer; the assigned proctor will work with the candidate to determine that it functions only as a braille-input tool.
- If the candidate's documented physical restrictions prohibit use of either a Perkins Braille with or without extended keys or an electronic braille, keyboard entry may be an approved option. A computer keyboard and CDE-approved braille-entry-only software / hardware may be used and will be provided at the test site. The use of braille translation software, such as Duxbury or Megadots, is not acceptable as a means of braille production for the purposes of demonstrating braille competency for the CDE certificate.

Accommodations for Braille Renewal Modules

The above noted procedures for applying for an accommodation are also mandated for the candidates taking the CDE approved braille-renewal modules. More information can be found about the renewal modules is available in the *Braille Competency Renewal Testing Guidelines*, which can be found at the following CDE webpage: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-vision_guidedocs